Chapter 1

Workbook Introduction

This workbook is intended as a companion document to the book, *Kanban Made Simple* (AMACOM, 2003). We developed it to help readers implement the seven-step process presented in the book. The workbook presents a step-by-step approach with forms and questions, which will take the reader through each step of implementing a kanban.

As a refresher, remember that we defined kanban scheduling as demand scheduling. Therefore, for a scheduling process to be considered a true kanban, the production process it controls must:

- Only produce product to replace the product consumed by its customer(s)
- Only produce product based on signals sent by its customer(s)

The kanban schedule replaces the traditional weekly or daily production schedule most of us have become familiar with in manufacturing operations. This schedule is replaced with visual signals and predetermined decision rules that allow the production operators to schedule the line.

The following benefits result from the implementation of kanban scheduling:

1. Reduces inventory
2. Improves flow
3. Prevents overproduction
4. Places control at the operations level (with the operator)

5. Creates visual scheduling and management of the process
6. Improves responsiveness to changes in demand
7. Minimizes risk of inventory obsolesce
8. Increases ability to manage the supply chain

To help in the implementation process we are proposing a seven-step process to guide you through the implementation process. Keep these seven steps in mind as you progress through this workbook:

9. Conduct data collection
10. Calculate the kanban size
11. Design the kanban
12. Deploy the kanban
13. Train everyone
14. Audit and Maintain the kanban
15. Improve the kanban

However, although these process steps will guide you, the implementation of kanban does not happen in a vacuum--it requires a team approach.

The biggest obstacle to implementing kanban is you. The fear of losing control, running out of material, and the ability of the operators keep many companies from ever starting the journey. Don't become part of this group--recognize your own fears and put action plans in place to prevent these fears from being realized. Or, if your fear can't be prevented, then have a standard operating procedure in place to deal with the problem when it occurs.

Using This Workbook

Each chapter in this workbook is dedicated to one of the implementation steps and parallels the book's chapters. In each chapter, we will present forms and questions to help the reader in implementing their kanban. Additionally, Chapter 6 includes presentation slides to serve as a draft training presentation. To further assist in implementation, all the forms are presented first as blank forms suitable for reproduction, and in a second version with comments to help in understanding and in facilitation of group meetings. The presentation slides have been annotated and are intended for tailoring by the reader. The questions asked throughout the workbook are intended as thought joggers for both individual readers and for group meetings.

Finally, by following the process in the workbook and documenting your findings, you will have a complete record of the implementation process. The completed workbook sections can now serve as a historical file for future reference.